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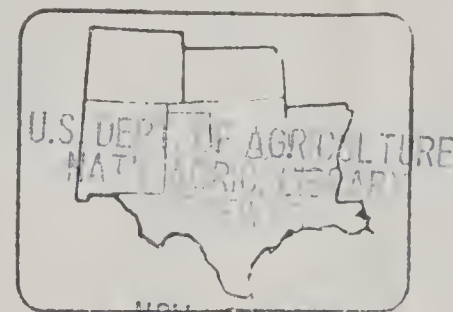
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## SOUTHWEST REGIONAL INFORMATION OFFICE

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
1100 Commerce Street • Room 5-C-40 • Dallas, Texas 75242  
Telephone (214) 749-3331 Sorenson



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### USDA Proposes Revised Grade Standards for Frozen Green and Wax Beans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed to revise its grade standards for frozen green beans and frozen wax beans.

The proposed changes would eliminate the use of dual grade names for the same quality of products and would redefine the allowances for different kinds of defects in product quality, according to Carol Tucker Foreman, assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services.

The proposal retains the three grades, U.S. Grade A, U.S. Grade B, and U.S. Grade C. In line with the USDA policy to make grade names less confusing to consumers, the alternate grade names Fancy, Choice, and Standard would be dropped.

Current grade standards which have been in effect since May, 1975, allow tolerances for defective beans. Under the standards all types of defects are grouped together into a single category. This proposal would call for two separate categories of defects with separate tolerances. One category would be for maturity--overmature beans are considered defective--and the second would include all other types of defects such as mechanical damage, vines, stems, tough strings, and insect injury.

The proposal also would provide for two kinds of pack--regular frozen pack, and multi-blanch pack. The regular frozen beans are the type consumers find in the supermarkets. Multi-blanch beans are partially cooked for special purposes such as frozen dinners.

Foreman explained that the current standards downgrade multi-blanch beans because of dullness in color, even though they are intentionally precooked. "This proposal would correct this deficiency by providing for precooked beans as a separate type of pack," she said.

The proposal is scheduled to be published in the Oct. 17 Federal Register and interested persons have until Nov. 30 to comment on it. Copies are also available from the Fruit and Vegetable Quality Division, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Written comments should be sent to the Executive Secretariat, Room 3167-S, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250, where they will be available for public inspection.

FSQS establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the standards and grading services is voluntary.

